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Super Spy, Strange Ally

Books

Reviewed by

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GEHLEN: Spy of the Century. By E. H. Cookridge.

(Random House, 402 pp., illustrated, \$10.00)

THE GENERAL WAS A SPY: The Truth About General Gehlen and His Spy Ring. By Heinz Hohne & Hermann Zolling. Introduction by Hugh Trevor-Roper and Preface to the American Edition by Andrew Tully.

Reinhard Gehlen was a Nazi general with an obsessive hatred of communism who may have had more influence on the course of the Cold War than any other man. Soviet articles refer to him as a fascist warmonger who was the biggest single factor in the prevention of an East-West detente. These two books tell his extraordinary story.

From late 1941 to the end of the war Gehlen was Hitler's chief of intelligence for the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. Then, having arranged to be captured by the Americans, he soon emerged as the principal source of CIA intelligence from the communist world until 1955, when he became Chancellor Adenauer's chief of intelligence for the West German Republic.

Gehlen was one of the planners of "Operation Barbarossa," the 1941 German attack on the Soviet Union, which sent Nazi divisions six hundred miles into the U.S.S.R. in seven weeks, placing 50 million Russians under Hitler's rule. When Gehlen became chief of intelligence for the Eastern Front, he immediately began organizing a Russian Army of Liberation among anti-Communist prisoners of war and partisans. By the spring of 1943 he had organized this army under Soviet Gen. Andrei Vlassov, who had been captured by the Germans and turned against Stalin. Vlassov and Gehlen estimated that there were hundreds of thousands of anti-Communist Russians prepared to join with the Germans in the overthrow of Stalin.

But Gehlen's plans ran head-on against Hitler's view that the Slavs were sub-human beings who should be exterminated by terror and mass execution. At

first Vlassov's propaganda leaflets promising good treatment to deserters and employment in the Vlassov movement produced massive defections, but soon Hitler's ruthless treatment of the Russians brought an end to that. Had Hitler not been a maniac, it is conceivable that Gehlen's plans would have provided the basis for a German victory in the East, certainly a substantial prolongation of the war.

Gehlen remained loyal to Hitler, but seeing how the war would end he made plans for his future. He arranged to have all his intelligence files on the Soviet Union packed in 50 steel cases and hidden away until he could be captured by the U.S. Army. As Stalin's aggressive program in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Iran began to unfold, it was apparent to the Americans that they were totally unprepared, without intelligence about the Soviets. But Gehlen was prepared and had soon negotiated a remarkable deal in Washington giving him authority to establish an all-German intelligence apparatus with complete control over its personnel.

In the little village of Puchach outside of Munich in a large housing development formerly for SS officers, Gen. Gehlen built a walled-in headquarters for what was soon to become the spy base of the Cold War, providing the CIA with 70 per cent of its intelligence on the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. Thus, in a matter of months Hitler's chief anti-Soviet spy had become the Soviet expert for the United States.

There can be little doubt that the Soviets, fearing the Germans more than any other force, were influenced in their assessment of

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U.S. policy by the fact that Gehlen was selected for this role. But there can be little doubt too that given Stalin's aggressive moves the U.S. would use the only available source of intelligence. Probably the revisionist historians of the Cold War will be debating for years the essence of the conclusion E. H. Cookridge reaches in his book: "Whether we like it or not, Western democracy must be prepared in times of danger to accept such strange allies as Reinhard Gehlen in defense against totalitarianism."

According to Cookridge, who is a British author of many fine books on espionage, the CIA pumped over \$200 million into the Gehlen organization. But the results more than paid off. Among its sensational exploits were the accurate forecasts of the East German uprisings in 1953, the Hungarian revolt in 1956, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Gehlen secured the text of Khrushchev's secret speech denouncing Stalin, and gave it to Allen Dulles. His intelligence operations exposed some of the most successful Soviet secret agents. His plans led to the 600-yard tunnel the CIA dug into East Berlin, where the main telephone trunk lines leading to Moscow and other capitals in Eastern Europe were tapped for nine months until this incredibly successful operation was discovered. In June, 1967, CIA Director Richard Helms was able to make high marks from President Johnson by prediction the exact date of the six-day Israeli attack in the Middle East. His source: Gen. Gehlen.

It wasn't until he became head of German intelligence that Gehlen's plans began to be defeated mixed with his successes. The Communists be-

came more effective in penetrating his organization and planting fake information. But the greatest blow to Gehlen was the discovery in 1962 that his chief of counter-intelligence, Heinz Felfen, was a Soviet double agent. The Felfen Affair, combined with changes in German political leadership and the new technology of spy planes and satellites all contributed to the fading impact of Gehlen. He retired in 1968 at 65.

Gehlen probably was the "spy of the century," but his rightist proclivities and rigid anti-communism probably contributed to prolonging the most dangerous period of the Cold War and may have slowed the evolutionary political process in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. A proponent of revolution not evolution, he believed that all communism was bad and dreamed of war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. He had no sympathy for national communism, Titoism, and revisionism. He didn't seem to believe that the political process in Moscow and Eastern Europe would allow for a struggle for power between the rightist Stalinists and the anti-Stalinist revisionists. Even after the advent of Khrushchev his operations continued to give weight to the arguments of those Communist leaders who most feared the Germans and who were most opposed to relaxing the Stalinist tactics of tyranny and terror.

Both of these books are lively reading, well documented and cover essentially the same events. The Cookridge book is better organized and better written, but spy buffs may enjoy the operational detail of "The General Was A Spy" by Hohne and Zolling, two German newsmen who write for Der Spiegel.

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